



FIVE REASONS YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE

2ND REASON: NUMEROUS SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament documents have been verified, supported and

corroborated with internal evidence (eyewitness support, consistency of the time lines in the Gospels, names of cities and individuals) as well as external evidence (archeological support, ancient non-Christian authors).

We read in the 1st part of this article that we can take the Gospels as serious historical accounts, as they were written by the people who knew Jesus best and were part of His inner circle, or people who lived at that time and in that region. Let's now take a look at what some unfriendly pagan or non Christian sources reported about Jesus (there are many more sources, but I do not have room enough for them in this short article):

UNFRIENDLY PAGAN SOURCES:

Thalus, 52 AD, historian, writing about the crucifixion: "On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down."

Cornelius Tacitus, historian, 56-120 AD. Writing about who Nero blamed for the destruction of Rome: "Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty (crucifixion) during the reign of Tiberius, at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition (resurrection) erupted ..."
(Written late first century or early 2nd century)

Mara-Bar Serapion, syrian philosopher: "What benefits did the Jews obtain by murdering their wise king? ... After that, their kingdom was abolished... The wise king lived on in the teachings he enacted." Here we have Jesus described without a name, as the wise king. (Late first century)

The historian Phlegon (80-140 AD) (as quoted by Origen) not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events ... but also testified that the result corresponded to His predictions. He also wrote: "Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to Himself, but that He arose after death, and exhibited the marks of His punishment, and showed how His hands had been pierced by nails."

UNFRIENDLY JEWISH SOURCES:

Josephus, Jewish historian (37-101 AD): "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. He was a worker of amazing deeds and was a teacher of people who gladly accept the truth. He won over both many Jews and many Greeks. Pilate, when he heard Him accused by the leading men amongst us, condemned Him to the cross, but those who had first loved Him did not cease doing so. To this day, the tribe of Christians named after Him has not disappeared."

If you were to go back and reconstruct the story of Jesus, not using any Christian writings or witness, but only the most ancient records we have, this is what you would know about Jesus:

Jesus was a real man who lived in history. He was reportedly born of a virgin, and had an earthly father who was a carpenter. He lived in Judea, in the region known as Palestine. He was wise and righteous, His teaching was so influential that He developed a large following of Jewish and Gentile disciples. He taught His disciples to live with the same virtue He exhibited, and His moral code was exceedingly high. But He was more than just a moral teacher, He possessed “magical powers” and had the ability to accurately predict the future. His supernatural acts and teachings persuaded many Jews to walk away from their Jewish beliefs. Jesus claimed to be God and His disciples readily accepted this claim. The Jewish leadership ultimately brought up charges against Jesus based on His actions and His teachings. He was prosecuted and crucified under Pontius Pilatus, during the reign of Tiberius Caesar. There was an earthquake and darkness at the point of His execution. Jesus’ followers reported seeing Him resurrected three days after the crucifixion, and He even showed them His wounds. His believers believed that the resurrection proved Jesus was the Messiah. They suffered greatly at the hands of the Roman Empire.

You could know all of that information and history about Jesus and His followers, from unfriendly and non Christian sources from first and early second century, without even opening a Bible.

These are the kind of things that strengthen our confidence and corroborate the claims of the Gospel. Compared to others, no ancient document stands up as well as the New Testament does.

(To be followed)